



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO MANAGER'S REPORT

DATE ISSUED: October 18, 2000 REPORT NO. 00-223

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Docket of October 23, 2000

SUBJECT: SANDAG Walkable Communities Demonstration Program

SUMMARY

Issues - Should the City Council direct City Staff to apply for \$1,040,000 in *TransNet* funds through the SANDAG Walkable Communities Demonstration Program for eight pedestrian improvement demonstration projects in the communities of City Heights, Clairemont Mesa, Greater Golden Hill, Greater North Park, Mission Valley, Peninsula, Southeastern, and Uptown?

Manager's Recommendation - Authorize City Staff to seek funding from the SANDAG Walkable Communities Demonstration Program per the staff recommendation.

Other Recommendations - None.

Fiscal Impact - If a grant agreement is executed, the City could receive up to \$1,000,000 to implement the proposed projects.

BACKGROUND

In April 2000, the SANDAG Board of Directors allocated \$1 million of *TransNet* funds in Fiscal Year 2001 for the Walkable Communities Demonstration Program. The allocation is intended to fund projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to pedestrian access problems and that create pedestrian-friendly environments. The three principles of a pedestrian-friendly environment, as defined by the SANDAG Walkable Communities Advisory Committee, are safety, convenience, and a pleasant environment.

Funds will be granted in up to three categories - Design / Construction Activities, Planning Activities, and Educational Programs. The funds are prioritized for Design/Construction

projects; however, funds may be available for planning and educational activities if there are outstanding projects submitted in those categories. Eligible applicants for the funds are the 18 cities in the San Diego region and the County of San Diego. The funds are available on a competitive basis and will be awarded to the most meritorious projects. A complete description of the demonstration program is included in this report (Attachment 1).

The notice of funding availability for the Walkable Communities demonstration program was released August 1, 2000 by SANDAG to the 19 local jurisdictions, as well as numerous community groups, including all of the City of San Diego's recognized community planning groups, and other various organizations and interested parties. In order to further ensure that community groups in San Diego were aware of the program, as well as to set up a process for inclusion, the City of San Diego distributed a letter (Attachment 2) on August 15, 2000 to the Mayor, the eight council district offices, relevant City Staff, all community planning groups, and all of the Business Improvement Districts. The letter described the program, included an application, and requested that applicants submit their proposals to the City of San Diego Transportation Department by September 5, 2000. The deadline was set for early September so that the Traffic Engineering Division, Long Range Planning Division, and Economic Development could review and recommend proposals to include in the City of San Diego submittal to SANDAG.

City staff received fifteen applications for funds in Council Districts 2,3,4,5,6,7, and 8 for a total of \$1.9 million. Please see Attachment 3 for a summary of the submitted projects.

DISCUSSION

City staff reviewed proposals to select projects that were most responsive to the grant criteria. In addition, Long Range Planning and Economic Development and Community Services staff reviewed the proposals to ensure consistency with community plans, revitalization plans, and other relevant policies and plans. Traffic Engineering reviewed projects to verify cost estimates and project feasibility. City staff prioritized construction projects, given the predominant amount of money committed to that category by the SANDAG board. Based on this review, staff recommends the following projects for submittal to SANDAG based on feasibility, city policy, and competitiveness. The total amount of funds requested per staff's recommendation is \$1,040,000.

- Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvements at Euclid Avenue and Home Avenue
The Euclid Avenue Revitalization Program, adopted by the City Council on July 31, 2000 recommends specific improvements to enhance pedestrian access and community character. These improvements include City Capital Improvement Project funded curb, gutter, and sidewalk installations and repairs with ADA compliance, an intersection realignment to remove excess pavement and better control automobile traffic. The SANDAG funding is requested as a portion of this project to provide prominent physical and landscaping features to further enhance the pedestrian environment beyond basic capital improvements. This proposal is supported by the

City Heights Area Community Planning Committee and has included the participation of other interested community members. The funding request is for \$166,000.

- Central Mission Hills Pedestrian Circulation Program

The Uptown Partnership, Inc. initiated this proposal to enhance the walkability of the intersection at Washington Street and Goldfinch Street in the Uptown Community Plan area. Enhancements include sidewalk “pop-outs”, Washington Street median improvements, a “Pedestrian-Only Traffic Signal Cycle”, diagonal parking on Goldfinch Street, a Parking Fee Collection Box, and landscaping improvements on Goldfinch Street. The funding request is for \$99,000.

- San Diego River Path at Qualcomm Stadium

The project is located in Mission Valley, abutting Qualcomm Stadium. It will provide a connection from Mission City Parkway in Mission City, a developing mixed use project at the west end of the path, to Qualcomm Stadium, and to residential, commercial, cultural, and educational uses at the east end of the path. The path would parallel San Diego River Park using an existing traffic lane into the stadium, connecting a future sidewalk at the west end to an existing sidewalk at the southeast corner of the stadium parking lot, and extending north to an existing bicycle/pedestrian path that continues to the north. The funding request is for \$98,000.

- 30th Street/Switzer Canyon Bridge Enhancement Project

The 30th Street/Switzer Canyon Bridge Enhancement Project proposes to construct a pedestrian wooden walkway ramp on the 30th Street Bridge as an alternative to walking on the sidewalk adjacent to street traffic. Additional improvements include constructing a landscaped median as a traffic calming device. The ADA approved ramp, on the eastern edge of the slope, will offer pedestrian an alternate route, and provide views of the canyon and downtown. Educational information and signage about the characteristics of the ecosystem, and the history of the surrounding communities of North Park, Golden Hill, Burlingame, and South Park will be installed on the walkway. This project is a partnership with the Burlingame Homeowners Association. The funding request is for \$270,000.

- 25th Street Pedestrian Improvements

This proposal is to update and implement the 1987 Golden Hill 25th Street Revitalization plan to include new design improvements in the public right-of-way that will slow down traffic, increase off-street parking, and improve pedestrian safety. It will also implement the 1995 Sherman Heights Revitalization Action Plan’s proposed physical improvements for 25th Street. Improvements include pedestrian pop-outs at intersections, diagonal parking, tree planting, a pedestrian buffer on the SR-94 overpass, and construction of a landscaped median strip to provide an effective transition to Balboa Park at the north end of the street. The City is partnering with the Golden Hill CDC on this proposal. The funding request is for \$200,000.

- Imperial Plaza Environs

Imperial Plaza Environs is a large public plaza area envisioned for the intersection of Imperial Avenue, Commercial Avenue, Crosby Street, Oceanview Boulevard, and 25th Street in the

Sherman Heights, Grant Hill, and Logan Heights communities. The intersection is a major arrival point to several neighborhoods, and a convergence point for pedestrians, automobiles, and trolleys. Imperial Plaza Environs Area will entail construction of quality improvements including street trees, pop-outs, patterned paving, and pedestrian-oriented lighting to create a safe and pleasant setting for the high levels of pedestrian activity in the communities. This proposal has the support of the Sherman Heights and Grant Hill Revitalization Action Program TEAMS and a partnership with the New School of Architecture. The funding request is for \$100,000.

- Ocean Beach Pedestrian Enhancement Project

This proposal includes safety and visual improvements to encourage pedestrian activity within the Ocean Beach Business Improvement District. Improvements include improved access to the OB Library, OB Recreation Center, OB Elementary School, the OB Post Office, two transit stops, the Newport Avenue Commercial District, and the ocean. Components include decorative curb extensions, marine patterned sidewalk treatments, painted crosswalks, lighting upgrades, signage, traffic bumps, and 57 planters with plant improvements. This project is in partnership with the Ocean Beach Main Street Association. The funding request is for \$67,000.

- Comprehensive Vision Plan for Balboa Avenue Corridor

This proposal comprises the planning process for implementing the Balboa Avenue Beautification project, which has \$770,000 in TEA-21 construction funding. This proposal is to create a pedestrian vision plan for the 2.5 mile long Balboa Avenue corridor between Interstate 5 and Interstate 805, in Clairemont Mesa. The vision plan will be based on walkable audits and design charrettes. This project is in partnership with the SR-274 Balboa Avenue Citizens Advisory Committee and is supported by the San Diego Safe Kids Coalition, Caltrans, the Clairemont Town Council, Assemblywoman Susan A. Davis, Assemblymember Howard Wayne, and Senator Dede Alpert. The funding request is for \$40,000.

The remaining applications received by City staff are not recommended for submittal to SANDAG either because they did not meet the grant criteria, were not determined by staff to be competitive, were infeasible as proposed, or were not received by the September 5 deadline, and therefore were not able to be reviewed adequately for inclusion in the submittal package. These applications are:

- Gaslamp Association 5th Avenue Curb Pop-Out
- 55th Street Pedestrian Underpass
- Reo Drive Revitalization Project
- Rancho Bernardo I-15 Pedestrian Bridge
- Normal Heights Community Planning Committee Walkability Plan
- University Avenue Traffic Calming Planning Proposal
- Curb Ramps at Market Street Imperial Avenue and Orange Avenue.

The funding request for these remaining projects is \$867,400 (Note: the Rancho Bernardo I-15 Pedestrian Bridge application did not include a budget or a specified request for funds).

Attachment 4 is a brief summary of these projects and the reasons staff did not recommend these projects for submittal. These projects will remain on file in Long Range Planning and will be considered for future funding.

ALTERNATIVE

Recommend that staff submit an application to fund proposals not recommended in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Gail Goldberg, AICP
City Planner

Approved: George I. Loveland
Assistant City Manager

D. Cruz Gonzalez
Director, Transportation Department

CHRISTIANSEN/ATS

Attachments: 1. SANDAG Walkable Communities Demonstration Program Grant Criteria
2. City of San Diego Letter, August 15, 2000
3. Applications Received Summary
4. Application Summary for Projects not Recommended by Staff

Note: Attachments 1 and 2 are not available in electronic format. Copies are available for review in the Office of the City Clerk.

Applications Received Summary

Proposal	Amount Requested	Council District
* Euclid Avenue and Home Avenue Pedestrian Improvements	\$166,000	3,4,7
* Central Mission Hills Pedestrian Circulation Program	\$99,000	2
* San Diego River Path at Qualcomm Stadium	\$98,000	6
* 30th Street Switzer Canyon Bridge Enhancement Project	\$270,000	3
* 25th Street Pedestrian Corridor Improvements	\$200,000	8
* Imperial Plaza Environs	\$100,000	8
* Ocean Beach Pedestrian Enhancement Project	\$67,000	2
* Comprehensive Vision Plan for Balboa Avenue Corridor	\$40,000	6
Gaslamp Association 5th Avenue Curb Popout	\$239,400	2
55th Street Pedestrian Underpass	\$90,000	7
Reo Drive Revitalization Project	\$350,000	4
Rancho Bernardo I-15 Pedestrian Bridge	unknown	5
Normal Heights Community Planning Committee	\$72,000	3
University Avenue Traffic Calming Project	\$56,000	3
Curb Ramps at Market Street, Imperial Avenue and Orange Avenue	\$60,000	8
Total Requested	\$1,907,400	

* Staff recommended proposals for submittal to SANDAG.

Application Summary for Projects not Recommended by Staff

- Gaslamp Association 5th Avenue Curb Popout

This submittal originally proposed to add three pedestrian pop-outs along Fifth Avenue at the intersections of “G” Street, “F” Street and Market Street for a total request of \$891,628. The proposal was deemed less competitive because of its high cost, which did not include a local match and would have precluded other projects from being funded. The proposal concept was less competitive in that it did not incorporate additional pedestrian amenities and innovations. Additionally, staff did not receive material that fully responded to the grant criteria. Traffic Engineering reviewed the pop-outs at “G” Street and “F” Street to be infeasible because they would interfere with MTS bus operations and a right-turn lane. The Gaslamp Association subsequently requested that only the Market Street intersection pop-out be included in their proposal for a total project cost of \$239,400. However, the other issues were not resolved in time for inclusion in staff’s recommendation for submittal. This proposal does have the support of the Centre City Development Corporation Board and is in Council District 2

- 55th Street Pedestrian Underpass

The 55th Street Pedestrian Underpass is a component of the San Diego State University Aztec Walk, an east-west pedestrian mall. The underpass is proposed to encourage travel between campus activity centers such as the Aztec Recreation Center, the Cox Arena, residence halls, Tony Gwynn Stadium, Peterson Gymnasium, Parking Structure 5 and the new Aztec Athletic Center. The project is in Council District 7 and is supported by the San Diego State University Master Plan, the College Area Community Council, the Public Advisory Committee for the College Area Redevelopment Project and the Campus Development Committee. The proposal has a \$810,000 match from the San Diego State University Parking Reserve Fund and is requesting \$90,000 from the Walkable Communities program. Staff was unable to adequately review the proposal because it was received ten days after the September deadline.

- Reo Drive Revitalization Project

This proposal was submitted by Long Range Planning staff to implement the Reo Drive Revitalization Plan in Council District 4. The project was withdrawn because of uncertainties in the project schedule and with the property owners. The project request was for \$350,000

- Rancho Bernardo I-15 Pedestrian Bridge

This proposal was submitted by the Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Board to install a pedestrian bridge over the I-15 freeway to provide access to the proposed transit terminal/park and ride on West Bernardo Drive from the Rancho Bernardo Commercial district. The project is located in Council District 5. The proposal was deemed infeasible for this round of funding due to lack of information. The requested funding amount is unknown.

- Normal Heights Walkability Plan

This project is proposed by the Normal Heights Community Planning Committee to create a

walkability plan along Adams Avenue at the Midtown Center Project. This proposal is in Council District 3. The proposal was deemed less competitive, based on the SANDAG criteria for project readiness. The funding request is for \$72,000.

- University Avenue Traffic Calming Project

The University Avenue Traffic Calming project was proposed by the North Park Main Street Association to prepare a traffic calming plan for the University Avenue corridor between Park Boulevard and the I-805. The proposed project is in Council District 3. The proposal was deemed less competitive, based on the SANDAG criteria for project readiness. The funding request is for \$56,000.

- Curb Ramps at Market Street, Imperial Avenue and Orange Avenue

This proposal was submitted by the Transportation Department to install pedestrian ramps at the above streets. The application has been withdrawn because it does not meet the grant criteria. This project is in Council District 8. The funding request was for \$60,000